A True Relation OR ACCOMPT OF *The whole* PROCEDURE BETWEEN *The Corporation at* CANTERBURY, AND Mr. *John Sonner*, *Concerning the* NEW-MARKET-HOUSE *there.*

Nihil charius æstimamus, quàm beneficium,
Quod diu petimus: nihil vilius, cum accepimus. Seneca.

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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

The Preface.

THAT the publick and common good and benefit of any place or Society is of every individual Member in particular; but more especially, of the Representatives of that Society in general, rather to be studied, than their own private or particular ends or interests; none (doubtless) will offer to deny. And yet by sad experience what more frequently found true, than the quite contrary? Aswell whole Societies,

cieties, as particular members too too often casting off all care of the Publick, and abandoning themselves to selfishness, and the study only of their own private commodity.

How happy then (because so rare) is the condition of that Society, where such a Genius, *such a general concent in promoting the common good of the place universally obtains, and is diffused throughout the whole body! Where this fails, as most where it doth) the next happiness to it of this kind, is to find such a publick spiritedness in single and particular persons, (whether members of, or friends to such a Society) as makes them to become examples to others of piety and bounty,*

bounty, by acts of publick and common benefit to the place. And consequently, to what a kind and welcome entertainment, to what a return of gratitude, is that Society obliged, who are made the objects of such publick piety and beneficence!

If so; how much then is that Society to blame, which is not only slack and backward to such acts of publick good themselves; but also to incourage and return thanks to those particular persons, to whom God hath given, together with ability, such a publick spirit and mind, as (in any eminent degree, at least) to become their benefactors! Whether there be such a Society, or not, at this day, let who so will be judge

that

that ſhall conſult the following Mirrour, repreſenting not the ill requital and unworthy uſage of Arch-Biſhop Abbot, *the Founder of their noble Conduit, by a prevailing faction, (headed by a* Peterling*) among their prædeceſſors; but (that which cannot but revive the memory of it) the unworthy Entertainment of a new piece of beneficence by a like faction in the preſent Corporation: notwithſtanding that foundation of gratitude, and better uſage from them, but newly laid by the Benefactor, as being chiefly active and inſtrumental in procuring new Gates for the City; impiouſly robbed of their old by the Rebels, from the late Archbiſhop* Juxon.

A true Relation or Accompt of the whole Proceedure between the Corporation at Canterbury *and Mr.* John Somner.

THAT uſeful and antient Structure of Stone, of a circular form, graced with an aſcent of ſeveral ſteps, for peoples accommodation to ſit upon, and expoſe their wares, and (for their better ſhelter from foul weather) covered over head with a platform of Lead; the *Market-Croſs* at *Canterbury*, built by the bounty and piety of a *quondam* wealthy Alderman, of grateful memory, being in the late times of miſ-rule and confuſion, beaten down and ſwept away by the avarice and impiety of a beggerly factious Alderman, of hateful memory, to the diſhonour of the City, and detriment of Town and Country: and the Citizens (ſenſible of the want of ſuch a piece, both of ornament and uſe) being, as I was, full of their wiſhes and longings for the day, when the generous and publick ſpirit of ſome good Benefactor, would provoke and engage their gratitude by adorning and accommodating

modating their City with a new piece, another pile of that nature: and after a long and tedious time of expectation, none offering at the undertaking, I, though one of the meaneſt among the many naives of the place, yet impatient of the Cities want of an accommodation, ſo uſeful as well as ornamental; and finding others more able than willing, gave leave and way to my will to out-vy my ability, rather than the place of my Nativity ſhould any longer ſuffer under the reproch of ſuch a great defect: not doubting of the encouragement of the virtuous undertaking by the courteous acceptance of it from my fellow-Citizens: and the rather because of the publick good which from the beginning I propounded to my ſelf, and made known to ſome of them in this affair. But it falling out otherwiſe; inſomuch as my real intentions for reſigning all up to publick and pious uſes, are now quite altered, I thought it not amiſs (for their ſatisfaction who may inquire into the cauſe) to give them an accompt of the whole tranſaction, leaving it to them freely to judge at whoſe Dore the blame lies.

Having therefore, by the Cities free permiſſion, and with the expence of Four hunded pounds and upwards, erected and completed a Market-houſe, (a piece of ſuch Elegancy as much commends the Architect) conſiſting of a double Story, divided into two fair rooms a piece, with a Pavement of Stone underneath, very uſeful for walking, out of Market time; and all this (in my intentions) dedicated to publick and pious uſes, without any jot of profit or advantage reſerved either to me or mine: and thinking it now a convenient time to broach my deſigne, and make it openly known to the Corporation, I drew a proſpect of it in writing, and by the mediation of a very worthy * friend, (one of themſelves) communicated it unto them under the term and title of Propoſitions of this tenor.

* Mr. *L. B.*

"*Certain*

" *Certain Propoſals, concerning the Market-*
" *Houſe at the* Bulſtake *in* Canterbury,
" *by me* John Somner, *the Sole Founder*
" *and Builder thereof, made to the right*
" *worſhipful the Maior and the Court of*
" *Burgmote,* October 24. 1665. *upon*
" *their Sealing of my Leaſe.*

" ALL things, according to mutual agreement between
" us, being accompliſhed, to the good content
" and ſatisfaction (I hope) of both parties; that is to
" ſay, on my part, the Market-houſe being erected,
" and nothing wanting to the completing of it, ac-
" cording to my covenant, but what is now in hand,
" and with all convenient ſpeed ſhall (God willing)
" be punctually perfected: and on your part, the Leaſe
" of the Superſtructure, according to your Covenant
" being made and delivered me, whereby I am become
" the true and ſole Owner thereof, and the thing in
" my free power to diſpoſe of, during my Leaſe: To
" let you, and poſterity after you, know and ſee, how
" in this work I have ſtudied the publick good, ho-
" nour and benefit of the City and Country, and the
" the encouragement of other perſons of ability, by
" my example, to do the like in ſome kind or other,
" much and far more than my own private profit,
" or advantage, which the Searcher of hearts knows
" to be ſpoken without the leaſt oſtentation or deſire
" of vain-glory or popular applauſe: I do ſo far re- 1.
" nounce my own intereſt in that part of the Super-
" ſtructure which looketh Weſtward, as freely to per-

 " mit

" mit and admit you to a participation with me in " the uſe and accommodation of the Chamber there, " at all times when you ſhall have occaſion of meeting " there together, or any Six or more of you, upon " any publick accompt concerning the City; and that " during my life time, and the life time of my Bro- " ther Mr. *William Somner*, if he ſurvive me.

2. " Secondly, I do as freely grant and permit the " uſe and accommodation of the ſaid Chamber, to all " and every of the ſix Com panies of the City, *viz.* the " *Drapers*, *Taylors*, *Mercers*, *Grocers*, *Carpenters*, *Smiths*, " and *Shoo makers*, for their and every of their meeting " there together, upon any occaſion concerning their " Companies Affairs, during the term aforeſaid. And " after mine and my ſaid Brothers Deceaſe, I abſo- " lutely give, reſign up, and relinquiſh the ſaid room " to you and them in perpetuity, for the uſes and pur- " poſes aboveſaid.

3. " Thirdly, In Charity to the Poor, I preſently give " up unto you and your Succeſſors, the Garret or Up- " per Story over the Chamber at the Eaſt end of the " ſaid Market-houſe, for a Store-houſe and place of " Stowage, for a Stock of Corn for the Poor of the " Six out-pariſhes of the City, *Weſtgate*, *St. Dunſtan*, " *Northgate*, *St. Pauls*, *St. Mildreds*, *St. Georges*, " and of one of the In-Pariſhes (becauſe I was born " there) St. *Alphage*. And to handſell the place, and " become (as I hope) as a leading, ſo a lucky ex- " ample of Charity in this kind to others, I do en- " gage at my own charge, to lay in there, for that " uſe, Twenty Seams or Quarters of Wheat aſſoon as " the room can be made ready, and fitting to receive " it: intending it ſhall lye and be kept there (as in a " Store-houſe) againſt a Time, or Year, of Dearth or " Scarcety, and then be delivered out at ſuch rates and

" prizes

"prizes as the Stock may thereby be renewed with ſuch ad-
"vantage as the Mayor and Aldermen for the time being
"ſhall think fit. And if, by Gods goodneſs and mercy,
"no ſuch dearth ſhall happen in the mean time, it ſhall
"be in the power of the then Mayor and Court of Al-
"dermen, at 3, 4, or 5. years end, and ſo from time to
"time for ever, to ſell and put off the ſaid 20. Seams of
"Wheat; provided that within 12. moneths time next
"following, they ſhall be bound to renew and recruit the
"Stock with as much new Wheat, and, if it may be,
"with advantage. And I hope, the room being of a
"capacity to receive twice as much Corn, this example of
"mine will (which God grant) invite and encourage thoſe
"of more ability to add unto the Stock. And ſhould it
"pleaſe God to ſtir up ſuch a number of charitable Bene-
"factours as that the Room will not be able to bear ſo
"great a Stock of Corn, (for I would have care taken it
"be not over-burthened:) I ſhall freely part with the
"other Store-houſe alſo, that I mean oppoſite unto it,
"at the Weſt end of the ſaid Market-houſe, for the ſame
"uſe; ſo as the Corn be ſent in within 12. moneths next
"enſuing the Date hereof.

"Fourthly, as there is room under the firſt ſtair-caſe, 4.
"the Rent whereof will ſerve to pay for the cleaning of the
"Market, and turning of the Corn, ſo I as freely give it
"up and put it over to you the ſaid Mayor and Aldermen
"and your Succeſſors, for that intent and purpoſe, with
"full power to hire or rent it out for the beſt advantage.

"This and all the reſt, I freely conferre and beſtow as
"aforeſaid, yet with and under theſe limitations and
"conditions here enſuing, and not otherwiſe, *viz.*

"Firſt, that you the Mayor and Aldermen be obliged 1.
"to perform and do what on your part is required to be
"performed and done, as touching the ordering and ma-
"naging of the Stock of Corn for the Poor.

Second,

2. "Secondly, that both you, and the six Companies shall "ingage for the keeping the whole Market-house afore- "said, from time to time in good and needfull repair, at "your and their costs and charges.

3. "Thirdly, That the Door-keeper of the Chamber, "Store-house, or Store-houses aforesaid shall be left to the "nomination and appointment of my self, during my life, "and after my decease to the nomination and appoint- "ment of my said Brother, if he survive me, during his "life.

4. "Fourthly, That the Market there shall from hence- "forth for ever be made a Free-Market for Town and "Countrey.

5. "Fifthly, That no Huckster be permitted to buy any "thing there, to utter and sell again there; which is a com- "mon thing, but indeed a very great abuse; as I have "observed since the Market-house was in building.

6. "Sixthly, That the Countrey people coming with "Provision to the Market there to sell, may have what "room the place will afford (for which end it was chief- "built) and not be turned out or excluded (as they now "are, many of them) by those that sell Herbs, Roots, "and such kind of Huck-stry-ware, to the dishonour of "the Town, and Market.

"All which Conditions and Limitations I conceive to "be so reasonable, and (if well lookt after and observed) "so honourable and advantageous to the City, (as tend- "ing only to the publick good, and no more to my own "private benefit than in common with others) as that "I cannot doubt of your readiness, in all particulars here "propounded, to close with

(Right Worshipfull)

Your humble Servant

JOHN SOMNER.

" Upon further consideration, That I may clear my self to " all the world of self-ends, or designing any private advan- " tage to me or mine by this Work, wherewith many male- " volent and unthankfull persons have been apt and for- " ward to blast, and (if they could) to discourage, my pub- " lick undertaking; I do now further declare my self, that I " am also willing to forgo the whole benefit (before reser- " ved to my self) of that other part of the first Story, the Ea- " stern Chamber of the Market-house aforesaid: offering " and leaving it to the choice of the present Mayor and Al- " dermen and their Successors, whether I shall employ " and hire it out to the best and most advantage my self, or " leave it to them so to do: but so as in either case the " whole yeerly Rent and Revenue thereof, which I cannot " reckon at less than 5. *l. per annum*, shall go to the " relief of the ten *Inbrothers* and *Insisters* of *East-bridge* " Hospital for ever, as an augmentation to their poor " and beggarly maintenance. And so Gods blessing be upon " the Work, and those that shall take example by it; " whilest, with sincerity of heart, I shall take up that of the " Prophet *David: Not unto us, O Lord*, &c.

Upon the communication of this Paper, the whole House of *Burgmote* (who till then had me in some suspition for aiming at matter of private advantage to my self, so far at least as untill I were reimbursed) was so exceedingly, not only satisfied, but taken with my Proposals, as after an unanimous approbation and applause, they voted and gave out in writing under their Town-Clerks hand, an Order for a Committee to give me a meeting in the new Market-house, for considering, consulting, and concluding a way for setling the whole affair according to my own desire, as by this following Copy will appear.

Civitas

Civitas Cantuar. "*Cur' Burgomati tenta ibidem die Martis,* "*ſcilicet, ſeptimo die Novembris, anno* "*Regni Domini noſtri* Caroli *Secundi* "*nunc Regis* Angliæ, *&c. Decimo ſep-* "*timo.*

"Whereas *John Somner* Gent. out "of a further deſire and intention of "the publick good, honour, and be- "nefit of this City and Country, hath "been pleaſed to preſent unto this "Court certain good propoſals concer- "ning the Market-houſe at the *Bulſtack*; "thereby declaring his mind and good "intent touching the ſame: It is or- "dered by this Court, that the ſaid "propoſals and every of them ſhall and "are hereby accepted and approved of. "And to the end that the ſaid Market- "place, and other the Superſtructures "and things in the ſaid Propoſals men- "tioned, may be the better ſettled and "eſtabliſhed by this Court, according to "the deſire, mind, and intent of the "ſaid

"said *John Somner*; and for the better "satisfaction of the said *John Somner*, "It is thought fit, and ordered by this "Court, That the Maior of the said "City, or any five or six of the Alder-"men, whereof the Maior to be one, "or any Ten of the Common-Councel, "whereof the Recorder to be one, shall "meet together on *Fryday* next at Two "of the Clock in the Afternoon, at "the said Market-place called the *Bul-"stack*-Market, and shall confer with "the said *John Somner* about the same: "and what shall by them be thought re-"quisite and necessary for the ordering, "serling, and establishing of the said "Market-place, and other things in "the said Proposals mentioned, shall "certifie at the next Burghmote.

Lovelace.

One thing which I principally designed and expected to be gratified in by the Town (although of no particular advantage to my self) was, a *Free-Market*.

By long obſervation and experience I had found the want of it, and the diſhonour and damage both, redounding to the City by the contrary. For, through the over-rigorous exacting of Tole by the Clerk of the Market, (who gave the City but a ſhort accompt of it, and is beſides, a perſon who ſtands branded by themſelves upon Record, for ſeveral miſcarriages in his place) the Sellers were and are wont to hide up a good part of their wares, and not bring them forth into the Market, but by parcels, whereby the Buyer can not have his choice, but muſt take what he finds at the Sellers price, or be gon. Hereof a multitude both in Town and Country daily complaining, I could not but ſtudy the remedying of it.

This (the Free-Market) went down with the Corporation very well at firſt, and becauſe their Clerk (if the Market were infranchiſed and ſet free) might ſuffer ſomewhat in the matter of his livelyhood, they were very forward to declare themſelves contented (for the Publicks ſake) to be put upon the ſeeking out ſome expedient (at their own charge) for making him a compenſation, and (by ſome overtures from me) ſoon found that a ſmall matter would do it. But not long after, by his endevours with the Chamberlaine, (than whom none more forward for a Free-Market, when the houſe was ſetting up) and ſome other of the Leading party in the Houſe, (a ſort of private vulgar ſpirited men, whereof no Society was ever yet free) this Trifle, this inconſiderable retrenching of their preſent Market-Clerks income, muſt carry the name of a juſt occaſion for altering their minds, and putting a ſtop (as it did) to the buſineſs; ſo that at the time and place appointed, I giving them a meeting to treat of a way of Settlement, ſuch doubts were caſt, and objections made, (in that particular eſpecially)

that

that I plainly perceiving they were quite and clean gon off from their former votes, and intended nothing leſs than a ſettlement of the buſineſs according to my Propoſals and their own Votes, could not but ſhew my ſelf ſenſible of the diſappointment; and thereupon in ſome diſcontent, deſired a diſſolving of their Meeting, and went my way.

They perceiving it, and thinking it ſomewhat too early to break off with me ſo ſoon, (as the malevolent party more than ſeemed willing enough to do) conſulted and found an expedient for removing this impediment, and maſtering this difficulty; but not until by my profers and condeſcentions I had yeilded to them ſo far in the qualifying and regulating that matter of a Free-Market, as fully to ſatisfie all oppoſers, by my conſenting to the tolling of all things in a manner, excepting only that which is not the third part of what things are tollable, Piggs and Poultry.

And now the matter (of Settlement) was afreſh propounded in Burgmote, where (after thanks returned me for my condeſcenſions) it was then agreed to proceed, and writings voted to be drawn up between us, to ſettle it accordingly. And drawn they were, whereat upon peruſal I taking ſome exceptions, as finding them not according to my propoſitions, in ſeveral particulars, I made the Burgmote acquainted with them; who by Mr. Recorder ſatisfying me, as to the main of my exceptions, ſo as we were arrived at a right underſtanding of each others meaning, I was now ready for a cloſe with them upon their own terms; and by the mediation of the ſame hand that before, ſignifying ſo much unto them at the next Burgmote after, they once more reſumed the buſineſs, and entred into a freſh debate about it.

By this time (by the means of a pragmatical member of the House, who looking AWRY both on the Founder and his Work, had from the first taken all occasions to evidence his dis-affection and dissent) the opposite party was grown so strong, that the result of this debate was not only a dissent and protest against their proceeding with me, but a casting off the business with a plain and uncivil jeer. For, in regard the repairs were to be cast on the Corporation (a burthen nevertheless so inconsiderable as cannot amount to 20 *s. per annum*, for an age; or rather no burthen at all, in regard the benefit of a room under the Stair case, which was offered them, would more then recompense it:) they would none of it, *they would not* (forsooth) *take a house to keep it in repair, for me and my brother to walk in.*

Truth is (by the Propositions) a reservation there is of mine and my brothers interest in one of the rooms during our lives, in common with the Corporation, and yet (as they were assured) but at spare times only when the Corporation had no occasion to use it themselves. And besides, we are (they know) persons well in years, and (unless they fear our Ghosts may haunt the place after we are dead) cannot probably trouble them long with our walking there; our walk being now down the hill, and by course of nature neer an end. See by the way (courteous Reader) how studious these men are to find and cast obstructions in the way of their own advantage, and to ward and stave off an intended boon! And on the contrary, how willing I have been to remove their obstructions, and how loth to be put upon turning that to my private emolument, which I intended for a publick good!

To

To ſumme up their objections: 1. They muſt abridge their Clerk of the Market of ſome inconſiderable part of his profit, which he may very well ſpare: how un-adviſed elſe was that Townſman, whoſe offer, though refuſed, was, if he might have the place, to do all the duties of it; to admit of a Free-Market, and yet to pay the City 5 *l. per annum*? 2. They muſt be at perhaps 20 *s.* charge *per annum* in repaires; and have more than recompenſe for it by that room under the Staires. 3. They muſt permit the Founder and his Brother (ancient men both) to inter-common with them in the uſe of one of the rooms, at ſpare times.

How trivial, how ridiculous, how inſignificant, and empty are theſe exceptions, ſhall I call them, or theſe cavils! What little or no detriment or diſcommodity doth or can attend them, compared with the great commodity and advantage which by the Propoſals, if embraced, would redound (in point of accommodation) to the Magiſtrates and the Companies, for Meetings and Treatments; and (in point of Charity) to the Poor, by a conſtant ſtock and proviſion of Corn there to be ſtored up for them, towards which, and for ſeconding me in my intended handſell, divers Gentlemen and others (who now will do nothing) had declared their forwardneſs in ſuch a bountiful way of contribution, as probably both the Store-houſes, (the two upper rooms) capable of Fourſcore quarters of Corn, would ſhortly have been full? What a ſhame muſt it needs be the whileſt to the City, and how can they anſwer it to poſterity eſpecially, to ſuffer ſo publick, ſo pregnant and permanent a boon and benefit to their Corporation and the Poor, not eaſily to be matched in a caſe of this nature, all the Kingdom over, for ever to miſcarry and be loſt, rather

ther than accept it upon conditions ſo eaſie of performance; ſo very eaſie, I ſay, as being now refuſed, they can never, whileſt the memory of this ingratitude doth laſt, reaſonably expect to be tried with the ſame, or the like again?

Yet refuſed them they have. And ſince they have had no more reaſon, I am reſolved (without hearkning to any further treaty with them, after ſo much baffling) to ſhew that I have not ſo little, as to obtrude, ſquander, and caſt away all my coſt, my kindneſs, and my charity (wherein I had it in my mind to have proceeded, by doing ſomewhat towards the Cities accommodation and ſupply with, what is much wanting to it, more Water,) upon ſuch unworthy, ungrateful objects: or to woo them to accept of that, which, if they had any courtſhip, they had reaſon to imploy it in perſwading me to part with. But ſince what, like a good Citizen, I once intended for the Cities publick commodity, is rejected, I ſhall, like a good husband, take it home and convert it to my own private advantage, all but the Corn, which I ſhall beſtow where it may be better accepted.

And in ſo doing, whether I be to blame or not, I am willing to refer to the judgement of any but ſuch thankleſs perſons as thoſe (the malevolent vulgar party among them, I mean; for them only I brand, which, yet, it ſeems, are the more prevalent party) I have had to deal withal: a ſort of men that have no ſenſe of the Cities either ornament or honor; no regard to the Poors, either relief or prayers; ſtudying only matter of preſent profit to themſelves, and thinking that cannot be a good work or thank-worthy, which requires any whit at all of contribution from themſelves, to complete or maintain it: but are ready, with *Judas*, to reckon all as waſt, that goes beſide

the

the bag: nothing to be acceptable, but what is profitable: All but trash that brings no cash to the *Chamber*. But having appealed unto others for their judgement, I may perhaps be blamed for anticipating it with mine. If so, I crave pardon, and, with full submission, cast my self upon the verdict of any but those who have dealt so unthankfully and unworthily with

The humble Appellant

John Somner.

FINIS.